

JEHOVAH, THE SHIELD OF BRITAIN.

A

S E R M O N,

ON

THE LATE MERCIFUL PRESERVATION

OF HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY

QUEEN VICTORIA,

PREACHED IN ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, ISLINGTON,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, JUNE 21, 1840,

(BEING THE FIRST DAY APPOINTED FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING.)

BY THE REV.

W. B. MACKENZIE, M.A.

MINISTER.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

LONDON:

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ISLINGTON,—J. H. JACKSON; J. K. FORD.

BRISTOL,—RICHARDSON; CHILCOTT.

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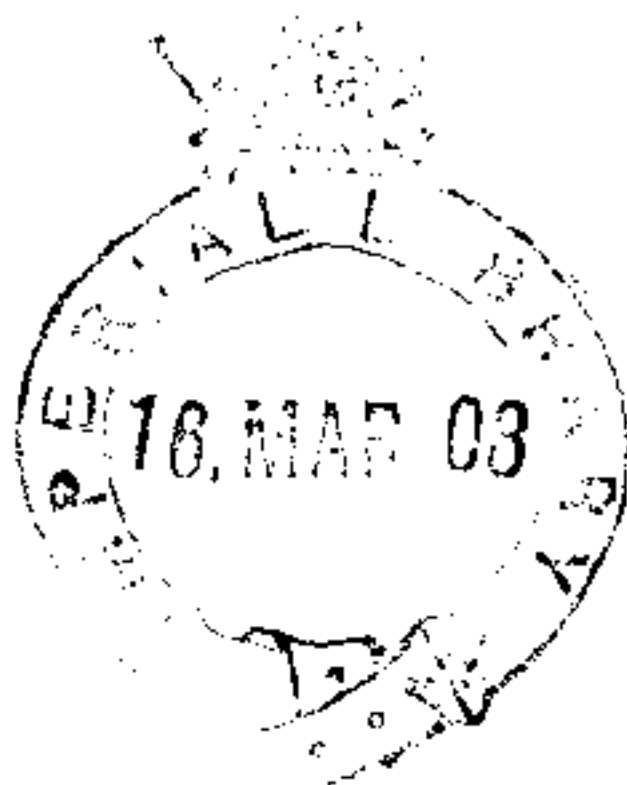
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TO THE
CHURCHWARDEN AND CONGREGATION OF ST. JAMES'S,
ISLINGTON,
THIS SERMON,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR DESIRE,
IN SINCERE CONCURRENCE WITH THE HOPE EXPRESSED IN THEIR REQUISITION,
THAT IT MAY TEND TO PROMOTE
" A WARM AND LOYAL ATTACHMENT TO HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,
AND ENCOURAGE CORRECT SENTIMENTS
RESPECTING OUR SOCIAL AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES,"
IS INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND AFFECTIONATE
FRIEND AND MINISTER,
IN THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD,
THE AUTHOR.

A

S E R M O N,

&c.

PSALM lxxxiv. 9.

Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine
anointed.

A SECONDARY, but not unimportant, advantage of our Established Church is this day presented to us,—that on the occurrence of national danger, or deliverance, the united prayers and praises of the faithful are directed to ascend together, as a cloud of holy incense, before the throne of God; the mind of a British patriot dwells with delight upon the reflection that, on this day, thousands of worshipping assemblies have bowed down before Him “who ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth,” for the signal preservation which He has graciously granted to this nation. May her national thanksgiving be a token for good. “And may the Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee, send thee

help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion ¹.”

The words before us were primarily used by David, then distressed by the sudden and unnatural rebellion of Absalom, and forced for a time to withdraw to the eastern extremity of his kingdom: then, in their spiritual application, they are the powerful intercession of a believer, confiding in the covenanted protection of God, that, in the crisis of danger, He would regard, deliver, and restore. “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of *thine anointed*.” The general doctrine of the text is therefore this: that the faithful gratefully record past divine deliverances, and confidently supplicate the continuance of divine favour for the present and future. “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of *thine anointed*.”

The ancient Jewish people were raised to their pre-eminent national distinction, in consequence of the true knowledge and spiritual worship of Himself, which God, by miracles and abounding grace, established and preserved among them. It was for “Mount Zion which God loved,” that He chose the tribe of Judah, and showed such distinguished regard to that ungrateful nation. *It will be our purpose first to look at the peculiar care with which the Lord continued to watch over the Jewish nation, in all times of danger, bearing in mind it was on*

¹ Ps. xx. 1, 2.

account of their national religion alone, that God so preserved them. And then transfer the prayer of the text to our native land,—pointing out the especial favour with which God has looked upon Britain, yet suspending its continuance upon the same condition,—her national Christianity. From this parallel, the inference will too plainly appear, if Britain, as Jerusalem, whose greatness is based alone upon the favour of God, should, like her, become unfaithful, some future Nebuchadnezzar may lead hither his triumphant armies, and lay her palaces and her temples in ruin;—some Vespasian may gather his future Romans, and dig a trench around her, make our Jerusalem a dreary desolation, and (oh! God forbid!) blot out her name from the nations of the earth.

I. When the true Church of God was limited to the persons and families of the Patriarchs, He showed Himself in those early times of necessity or peril, to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob, to be Jehovah, their Defender. “Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward¹.” In the memorable and eventful times which threatened the extinction of all the Church in Egypt, and the deep groaning of insufferable bondage arose from their sorrowful and desponding forefathers; when the fury of Pharaoh raged fiercely, who indignantly drove Moses for ever from his pre-

¹ Gen. xv. 1.

sence,—then did God arise and throw the shield of invulnerable safety around His redeemed people, opened a mysterious pathway among the stormy billows of the ocean, defended His chosen with the pillar of fire and the pillar of cloud, guided them in safety, as a shepherd guides his flock¹, and in the morning's dawn they saw the corpses of their Egyptian oppressors floating on the waves before them. Then did the nation of Israel, for the first time, feel the thrill of satisfaction that Jehovah was indeed their God; and then, in the glow of gratitude for the past, and in the prospect of many a danger still to come, did they cry, with one heart and one voice, as they began to tread the sands of the wilderness, “*Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*”

The dangers of the wilderness-passage were too signal to allow David to forget them, as he was meditating upon past national deliverances. His historical Psalms testify that he well remembered how God had subdued hostile Amalek, with other enemies, and had preserved them from intestine disorder, controlling the “madness of the people.” The insurrection of Korah and his company,—the licentious seductions of the Moabites,—the wars of Joshua,—the conquest of the promised Canaan, the satisfactory allotment and peaceful settlement of the tribes, in a land belonging to nations greater

¹ Is. lxiii. 11

and mightier than they,—these gracious and unquestionable interpositions filled the grateful mind of the Psalmist with devoutest adoration, and inspired him with brighter hope. “The Lord God is a sun and shield; he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.” A nation may suffer as severely, perhaps more ruinously, from internal jealousy and disunion, than by foreign attack; and deliverance from these secret perils may be more important though less conspicuous national mercies, than the overthrow of some formidable aggressor. The dangers of the Jewish nation, during the four hundred and fifty years when the Judges ruled, were those of jealousy or insubordination, rather than the terror of open invasion: but from age to age God raised up fresh deliverers,—a Gideon, a Jephtha, or a Samson,—by whom they were preserved and rescued: thus God “was their help and their shield.”

But the deliverances which David would most thankfully call to mind, were those instances of personal preservation which he had witnessed himself. His adventurous conflict with the lion and the bear, as he was tending his father's flocks, was recorded as one of his youthful escapes from death; his chivalrous and triumphant encounter with the gigantic Philistine, while the astonished hosts expected his temerity would be dearly recompensed by instant annihilation, this successful deliverance

had deeply convinced him that the God of armies was his shield.

The dangers of the secret assassin were also present to the grateful mind of David, as on this occasion he expressed his confidence in God. He had often, on his bended knees, recognised the hand of God in his critical escape from the murderous javelin of Saul, as he was playing upon his minstrel-harp in the presence of that dark and revengeful king. "Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall, but the Lord preserved me." While sheltered at the doubtful court of Achish, king of Gath, while hidden in the cave of Adullam, in the tribe of Judah, then in the wilderness of Ziph, and afterwards on the mountains of Engedi, on the borders of Arabia, never was this persecuted servant of the Lord delivered from the danger of sudden death; but, though hunted as a bird by the fowler, his continual preservation added strength to the convictions of his faith, that God was his "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

We may safely pursue the train of thought further. The prosperity of the Jewish Church and nation was greatly endangered by the revolt of the ten tribes, and the idolatrous corruption of religion which that separation produced. The nation, indeed, never recovered the blow which was inflicted in the time of Jeroboam, who forsook the Lord, and established idolatry in the kingdom of Israel. With

what deep yet unavailing sorrow must the spiritual Jews have observed so many of their fraternal but misguided tribes forsaking Jerusalem, the place the Lord had chosen—the tribe of Levi displaced by an unauthorized priesthood—Mount Zion abandoned for the idolatrous and interdicted images at Bethel and Dan, and the solemn yearly feasts disregarded and supplanted by profane assemblies. Then, in the tide of national irreligion, and ecclesiastical contempt, the spiritual Israelites, discouraged by abounding ungodliness, first corrupting their rulers, which soon spread through the mass of the people, and justly alarmed by the loud rumours of foreign aggression, fixed their firmer hopes upon God's ancient engagements with their forefathers, and cry, with the confidence of faith, in their distress, "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

During the reigns of the successive kings in both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, it was the mournful but appointed duty of holy prophets to go forth with reluctant warnings, to rebuke a stubborn and ungodly people, that if they did not humble themselves in national and personal repentance, God would chastise them with his heavy judgments. For many a weary year did Elijah and Elisha, did Isaiah and Hosea, did Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk, remonstrate against the increasing wickedness of the times, and prognosticate the fore-

doomed calamities which would speedily befall the nation. In the crowded courts of the temple, in the public resorts and thoroughfares of Jerusalem, or in the palaces of the kings, those venerable messengers of the Most High gravely expostulate and warn their ungrateful country, and in the prospect of coming evils intercede with God unceasingly in secret: "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

Regardless alike of the pathetic exhortation or stern rebuke of these holy men, the stubborn nation of the Jews was at length delivered up to the army of fierce Eastern invaders, and transported, in captive multitudes, to the plains and cities of Babylon. Their kingdom overthrown—their sabbaths dishonoured—their homes forsaken and desolate, and, worse than all, their holy and beautiful temple laid in ruins—no priests to minister, no sacrifice to offer, no feasts to keep—they learnt, in sorrow, the value of national religion by its loss. "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion;" yet casting their eyes with fond and sorrowful recollections towards Jerusalem, lying in heaps, and calling to mind that God had promised they should one day return, they cry, "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

In those troublous times, after the restoration of the kingdom of Judah, when no prophet after Ma-

lachi, was sent to teach, the strength of the nation was sapped by internal corruption, aggravated by frequent invasions, from the successors of Alexander, then with the Syrians, and with the fierce and rival Jewish princes, who fomented the angry spirit of faction, and lastly, when they became fretful and impatient subjects of the Roman empire under Pompey the Great, the number of those who “sighed and cried for the abominations” they witnessed, every year becoming less and less; yet, in those days of hopeless national decline, the sorrowful prayer of the psalmist was still heard in secret, uttered by some faithful Simeons and Annas, who “looked for redemption in Israel:” “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.”

But in the last sad catastrophe, foretold by our Lord in tears, when the enemies of Jerusalem should gather around her, as eagles voracious for their prey; in the dark dismantling of the holy city, not one hallowed stone should remain on another,—its sacred places utterly and for ever abandoned by God to the fury of war—the streets deluged with Jewish blood—her palaces in ruins—the temple in flames—denouncing curses on the head that ever planned its rebuilding,—in that final dissolution of the Jewish Church and people, which terminated at least their national existence, the pathetic intercession, thenceforth to be heard in Jerusalem no more, but transferred to Gentile churches was heard again in clear.

strong, accents, from many a faithful disciple in Corinth, in Ephesus, in Rome, or in Britain, taught, probably, by the fervid lips of Paul himself—“*Behold, O God OUR shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*”

God never leaves Himself without witness; if, from the unfaithfulness of one nation or Church, the “true light” ceases to shine, the candle of the Lord will certainly be lighted up elsewhere. If, for their unbelief the Jews were broken off, other branches are grafted in, who, in their stead, “partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree;” and if Christian Churches, thus grafted in upon the stock of the faith of Abraham, give way to unbelief, forget their great spiritual responsibilities, decline into laxity in practice, or error in belief, let them not be high-minded, but fear, lest, for their unfaithfulness, they too shall be deservedly and irrecoverably broken off. Yes, the Great Head of the Church has shown the *Christian* Church, as He did the Jewish, that He *will* do it. Where are the faithful worshippers at Corinth, at Philippi, and in the once flourishing Churches of Galatia? Where is the Church of Ephesus, planted by St. Paul, cherished by the venerable labours of St. John, the blessed survivor of the Apostolic band? Who is left in the Church of Alexandria, of Carthage, or in the Churches of Spain, to warn, to teach, to pray, or to praise? The solemn voice of family worship, the

loud devotions of the crowded temples, the secret sighs of “godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation,” are heard, alas! no more. When mercies, personal or national, are given, none cares to acknowledge; judgments threaten, but no voice is heard in intercessory prayer; great deliverances may be wrought, dangers may be averted, perils escaped, but no one there comes forth to stand up for God before an unthinking and unfaithful people. None enumerates past mercies, or deprecates future judgments in the fixed language of faith: “Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.”

But, brethren, it becomes me, on this occasion, more immediately to engage your attention upon the eminent distinction with which God Himself has dignified our beloved and native land.

We proceed, then,—II. *To transfer the prayers of the text to our native land, pointing out the especial favour with which God has looked upon her, yet suspending its continuance upon the same condition—her National Christianity.*

When God, inscrutable in His purposes, yet righteous in all His ways, desecrated and destroyed His ancient Church at Jerusalem, which had been for many generations the dwelling place of His glory, the centre of Divine knowledge to the world, and thus utterly extinguished His light in the temple of Jerusalem, He was pleased to kindle it,

(shall I say more brightly?) on His holy altar in Britain. When God clothed the daughter of Zion with sackcloth, left her, in anger, to be despised and trampled by the feet of Roman conquerors, her elders, her wise men, her counsellors perishing around her, and none left to pity or protect—then did Jehovah awake the daughter of Britain from her long obscurity, shamefully disfigured as she was, by Druidical painting, and degraded by idolatrous orgies,—“*Arise, shine, THY LIGHT is come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon THEE.*” It were not difficult to show that Britain has been made, in Christian times what Jerusalem was in Jewish:—the distinguished and chosen nation, “*the Anointed of the Lord;*” the shield of peculiar favour, which Jehovah used to throw around Zion, her preservative in times of great national convulsion, the same broad shield of Omnipotence has He held up over the favoured head of Britain also, to screen her from the ruthless invader from abroad, or save her from suicidal destruction from within.

If a history of this country from the Christian era to the present time were written, on the same principle as that of the Jewish people by the sacred writers, that is, not a secular narrative of wars and a philosophical digest of events, their causes and results, but a faithful record of God’s dealings with this nation, and our national conduct towards God,

marking with inspired precision the religious character of each reign, who among the kings of Britain, would receive the distinguished encomiums which are bestowed upon David, or Josiah, or Hezekiah, that they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord? And yet English history is dignified by the names of kings whom such a Sacred history would honourably mention for the help they rendered this nation, and the world at large, in promoting the progress of Divine truth. We dwell on this account, with more or less of gratitude upon the names of Alfred, of Edward VI., of Elizabeth, of Charles, of James, George III.; yea, and let us pray with devoutest fervour that the name of VICTORIA may be added to this royal catalogue, long, long to be cherished by the warm affections of a happy and confiding people; then may her fragrant name descend to future generations, not panegyricized by the needless praises of history, but embalmed, consecrated, immortalized, by the gratitude and admiration of her faithful country in every successive age.

Call to mind the special favour shown by God to this nation, in not delaying to evangelize Britain till some late period, as when Poland, Norway, and Russia tardily received the faith; then remark the Divine goodness in thus firmly establishing the pure Gospel in the British and Saxon Churches, long before the Romish missionaries came to corrupt the

It was an early distinction bestowed upon this Protestant land, that some of the brightest stars that preceded the Reformation arose in this island. Our Wickliffe, in the reign of Richard II., was one of the first who ventured to oppose the corrupt religion of the age, directing his hearers, both in the University of Oxford and elsewhere, to "*look up to Christ alone and be saved, and to seek the aid of the Holy Ghost.*" Lord Cobham also, in the reign of Henry V., was the first eminent martyr, who anticipated the light of the Reformation; and when that glory illuminated the world, it was a singular blessing that Cranmer, deeply taught in Divine truth, and fitted by his eminent spiritual wisdom to be a great restorer of the true faith, occupied the highest station in the Church. During those times of hope and fear, when too much true knowledge was spread among the people to allow them to remain contented with imperfect teaching, and too much real dislike to the power of the truth was evinced by Henry and Elizabeth to suffer the "Word of the Lord to have *free course and be glorified,*" then many faithful hearts were instant and successful in mighty prayer for the complete development of the whole truth of God in the Church:—"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old'." National wickedness indeed abounded, yet we feel sure, from the signal mercy continually shown

us, that in the worst periods of British history, God has ever had His eye upon a secret and chosen band, “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” — “poor, yet making many rich,” whom, like the hidden ones in Elijah’s time, the Lord had *reserved unto himself*. In the dark ages, when unchristian errors abounded, as well as during the active and portentous reigns while the Reformation was being wrought out, the cry often entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts, on behalf of this Church and nation: “Behold O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.” The commencement of the real greatness of this country is, I apprehend, to be dated from the reign of our Queen Elizabeth; not because the feudal system was then yielding to the spirit of commercial enterprise, giving great intrinsic importance to the middle rank of society, with the power, on the one hand, to control the nobles, on the other to protect the helplessness of the poor. No; the true greatness of Britain was then built and based upon the Bible, given and received by the nation, and upon our Protestant faith, then established as an integral part of the British Constitution. The Reformation in this country, — that distinguished and abiding blessing which stands pre-eminently at the head of all our national mercies, demanding continual national thanksgiving, — was conducted on the part of its great leaders with much searching the Scriptures, and glorifying God in prayer.

The Church of England gains too much upon the deep affections and the solid admiration of her *spiritual* members, to suppose it possible that that calm yet fervent spirit of piety had been vouchsafed unless God had been eminently consulted and honoured by prayer. We cannot, as a nation, be grateful enough for the true Christian character of our Protestant Church; were it not so, she could not have triumphantly survived, as she has, the shock of ages. We value the Church of England for her deep reverence for the Sacred Scriptures, which she introduces so plentifully into her Services—her forms and ceremonies, decent and reverential, intended as the handmaid of devotion, not so attractive, like the pompous ritual of Rome, that we think of the *effect*, and not the worship; not so negligent, like that of some bodies of Christians, who, in their anxiety to abolish the *form*, are in most imminent danger of losing the substance; but he knows not or cannot appreciate the true excellence of the Established Church, who does not adore the goodness of God for the doctrinal purity,—the elevated devotion,—the deep abasement of soul on account of sin, which breathes every where throughout her services. If there can be framed a vehicle for conducting the worship of a nation, by which the sinner is laid penitent and prostrate before the Supreme Majesty of Jehovah, by which the Lord Jesus Christ, in his three-fold offices, is held forth

before the people,—the One Name given among men, whereby we must be saved,—by which the Holy Ghost is honoured as the Lord and Giver of life,—that vehicle for national devotion is the Liturgy of the Church of England. Select the Litany, so comprehensive that every want of the experienced believer seems to be anticipated; so tender, yet so searching, that every true worshipper feels as if it were written especially for himself; and so truly catholic in spirit, that there is not a child of Adam though your worst enemy, but you bring his case before God, and implore blessings upon his head. Think of the Communion Service, what human words can be put together, more profoundly abasing than the Confession; you almost tremble as you kneel, while an awful solemnity fills and pervades the soul, repeat her words—“Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickednesses which we have from time to time, most grievously committed by thought, word, and deed, against thy Divine Majesty; provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us, we do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable; Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for thy Son

past." From this depth of penitential humiliation, whither the church will have all her members brought, transform your thoughts to her forms of praise, in which she rises to a strain of devotion fitted for the spirits of seraphs, whom we then join in that ecstatic response,—“It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God ; therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name ; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory ; Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High !” &c. Or, contemplate that divine hymn of praise, with which the devotion of the communicant ceases,—as if it had risen to the highest and sublimest pitch of worship that is here attainable, while we are “present in the body,”—“Glory be to God on High, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

“O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesu Christ ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the

sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

“For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.”

Truly, brethren, when we reflect soundly upon our Church, the eldest and fairest daughter of the Reformation, and form a proper estimate of her real character, as a vehicle for national worship and instruction, weighing with impartial hand the Scripture soundness of her doctrines—the pure spirituality of her services,—the decent solemnity of her ceremonies,—her respectful veneration for antiquity, qualified by the duty of private judgment which she points out to every man; distinguishing what is vitally essential and must infallibly be believed, as the Athanasian doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, from what is left an open question, as the millenium—or traditionary, as episcopacy¹;—

¹ I call episcopacy traditionary, to distinguish it from such parts of our Church's belief or constitution as are based wholly upon Scripture authority. The mixed evidence of Episcopacy appears to me to be this: that from the Apostles' time to that of the Reformation, no Christian Church existed without the distinct order of bishops, in addition to that of priests and deacons. When Episcopacy began, no historical evidence can be produced to show. There is then the strongest presumption,

and when we reflect that for three hundred years this great instructress of the British people has been training her immortal souls and presenting them to Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, of whom, multitudes are now going from strength to strength, adorning her communion by the purity and value of their lives ;—while multitudes whom she has loved and cherished, are already among the spirits made perfect before the throne, we cannot but cry, “ Pray, pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.” And her saints also, who have at length scaled that glorious height to which she pointed them, have received their brilliant crowns, and strike their golden harps, with ceaseless praises to the Lamb, that loved them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood,—it is far from unlikely, that in their grateful enumeration of countless mercies, they mention with fond delight, deepened by feelings of grateful satisfaction, their Scriptural Church, which received them among the faithful in Baptism,—which taught them to vow their vows unto God in solemn confirmation, cible, would certainly have been forthcoming before now, that Episcopacy is derived from the Apostles themselves ; then when you read the inspired Apostolic history, there is no text relating to Church government which does not most easily fall in with the idea that there were bishops, priests, and deacons,—three distinct orders ; indeed what St. Paul says concerning Timothy and Titus can hardly be interpreted as relating to the

which gave them holy words to express holier feelings; which urged them on when languid, or inflamed them when their spiritual affections waxed dull; which restrained them from error in doctrine by fixed forms of faith, and gave them the holiest sacramental mysteries, with wise cautions against the dangers of presumption,—it is far from unlikely that the believer now reigning and triumphing in the perfect righteousness of Jesus, often bends downward his attentive eye, or mixes, unseen, among the worshippers he has left behind, and listens with intensest zeal to the devotions in which He once was privileged to join. Yes, and methinks that those spirits made perfect—those invisible spectators of our national devotions—are far from being indifferent to the prayers and thanksgivings which ascend from every Church within these realms to-day. Oh! it is a goodly sight, on the frustration of black and infernal treason, plotting the life of our beloved Sovereign, to see this noble and distinguished nation fall prostrate before her Guardian and her God, with deep-toned thanksgiving for His merciful preservation of a life so important and so dear. Surely there is not a subject in these United Realms that knows the value of the name he bears, the freedom he breathes, or the birthright-blessings he abundantly enjoys, but must on this day strive to swell the amount of the nation's gratitude to God,

county, from town to town. Britain is here, at least, unanimous,—unanimous in worship—unanimous in gratitude—unanimous in prayer for her Sovereign.—We hear the nation's voice, "*Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.*" We mourn, and cannot but mourn, that the national freedom, which is our boast, should be abused to the permission, not to say the propagation, of much that is anti-Christian and pernicious. Britain indeed has much to bewail before her God; the cry of national sin is waxing louder and louder; the Sunday press still cries to heaven against her, and even new methods of Sabbath desecration are found out:—the Sunday railroads are now opening in every direction a flood-gate for turning the tide of metropolitan immorality among our hitherto peaceful rural population. Yes; the gorgeous Sunday banquetings and continental laxity of the rich; the covetous spirit of our steam-boat and railroad companies, and the low festivities of the poor, which the suburbs of London are grieved to witness, on Sabbath evenings—for this national and progressive sin Britain has need to mourn. As a nation, we are defective, most fearfully defective in that clear, uncompromising reverence for God, which is expected from us:—that bold avowal in the face of the whole world, "*This God is our God for ever and ever. He shall be our guide unto death.*" And why are we so? Why do we as a nation shrink? What do we fear?

Need Britain ever be ashamed of God, of His day, of His inspired Word? Need she be ashamed of Him who gave, and preserves from age to age, her matchless navies laden with the merchandise of the whole world; who crowns her arms with conquests, and pours the wealth of either India in profusion at her feet? When other nations have proved false, unthankful, unfaithful in little, shall Britain, the queen of nations, the dispenser of Scripture knowledge to the world, flying like the Apocalyptic Angel, in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to every kindred, and nation, and people, and tongue: shall she prove unfaithful in much? give up her Bible into traitorous hands; consent to desecrate her Sabbath, as other nations do; surrender the holy faith for which her martyred Reformers argued before kings, and spilt their life-blood for the truth? shall Britons see their venerated Church attacked, forsaken, and not rally, as her national phalanx, round her? shall we, I ask, forsake our God, who has recently crushed the rising spirit of anarchy—Chartism delighting in blood—who is ever controlling the fierce elements of angry faction “from—evil still educing good;” shall we forsake our God, who, above all, has now signally interposed and thrown the ægis of his guardian power around the head of our beloved Queen, and shielded her from the gripe of an assassin? Never! No! never! I hear the country’s emphatic voice

this day respond, never, while we have a monarch's crown to preserve, a threefold constitution to maintain, a *Spiritual, Protestant, National CHURCH* to uphold. We need not, cannot fail; there is the strength of Omnipotence pledged on our side—"brethren of the house of the Lord. our God, I will seek to do them good." But let our national Christianity fail; let the Church, the distributor of Christian light, and Christian instruction to the people, the Palladium of the nation's hopes, be enfeebled or eclipsed, and England's days are numbered. But we augur, this day, better things; we hear the voices of future generations rising to call her blessed¹. "We will sing a new song unto thee, O God. Thou hast given victory unto kings; thou hast delivered VICTORIA, thy servant, from the peril of the sword; may our sons grow up as the young plants, and our daughters as the polished corners of the temple. May our garners be full and plentiful with all manner of store; our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets: that our oxen may be strong to labour, that there be no decay, no leading into captivity, no complaining in our streets. Happy are the people that are in such a case, yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God."

¹ Ps. cxliv. 9—15.

